IF THERE ARE ANY AMERICANS

By Frank Chodorov

We learn that the Association for the Repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment has been launched, *pro forma,* and that its purpose is being applauded at large meetings, three and four a week. The news stirs the imagination even though it has not as yet hit the front pages.

This is not a reform movement; the proposal to do away with income taxation, *in toto,* is revolutionary in character. That is why the news is arresting. A reform is simply a change in the legal ritual of the country, and does not disturb the political setup. A revolution, on the other hand, shifts the incidence of power from one group to another, and sometimes, as in the case of the American Revolution, it transfers the seat of sovereignty from an entrenched institution to the citizenry as a whole. Whenever such a power-shift has been effected, whether by violence or constitutional means, the country has experienced a revolution.

A revolution was initiated in 1913, when the income tax amendment got into the Constitution. The amendment was not heralded as a revolution, and very few realized that it would come to one, but the fact is, as events have shown, that when the government got the power to confiscate the citizen's wealth it was put in position to confiscate his sovereignty. And that is revolutionary.

The basic doctrine of the American policy is that the source of sovereignty is the citizen; he simply makes a loan of it to his representative for a specified period. However, the exercise of sovereignty by a citizen presupposes his economic independence of the government he has chosen. If his livelihood is subject to government control or beneficence, or if the government, using his own money for the purpose, can harass and handicap him in his efforts to make a living, he is not likely to stand up to it. His sovereignty is diluted, and he becomes a subject, not a citizen.

It has been demonstrated during our forty years' experience with the income tax that sovereignty is indissolubly tied in with private property. If the citizen can retain possession and use of what he produces, he is the boss; if the government can grab his property he will learn to genuflect before it. It is because of the income tax that our elections have become a matter of insidious purchase; public opinion is what government propaganda, paid for by the citizen, makes it; and a vast machinery of intimidation

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and domination has left the individual little room for independent action. The shift of power from the citizen to the government is as complete as if it had been accomplished by an invading army.

The proposal to repeal the Sixteenth Amendment is therefore a proposal to restore sovereignty to the American citizen. It is, to use a modern term, counterrevolutionary. How far the effort will get depends on how many Americans are left in America. This is not a chauvinism, but rather an assertion that there is a tradition indigenously American, and the repeal proposal has some chance only if there are a fair number in this country who still hold to that tradition and are willing to fight for its retention. If, on the other hand, the habits of mind acquired under income taxation have completely submerged the American tradition, then any effort to restore citizen sovereignty is futile.

IT IS CUSTOMARY to identify the American tradition with the Declaration of Independence. Yet, the Declaration merely articulated what had become the habitual way of thinking in America over a century and a half. It phrased an American ethos. John Adams, writing in 1818, put it this way: "the Revolution was in the hearts of men" . . . it was effected "before the war commenced". That is to say, when Jefferson wrote about "unalienable rights" he simply put into words what Americans instinctively felt. They opposed the British Crown because they could not do otherwise.

When we try to define "Americanism" — of which there is much loose talk these days — we find it necessary to look to our beginnings for the essential ingredient. Whatever character this country can lay special claim to, it is the habit of freedom that was acquired before the country was formally organized. And it was an acquired, not an inherited characteristic, for the American was ethnologically as heterogeneous as his forebears. Nor did he get it from government. He had come by freedom by toil and trouble, and he meant to hold on to it.

When he got around to setting up a political establishment of his own, the American had sense enough not to put too much trust in it. He had learned — without the help of any book on political science — that inherent in government, any government, is the tendency to rob the individual of his freedom. Hence, while recognizing the need of government for orderly gregarious living, he was against giving any political setup a free hand; it must be hamstrung. The Constitution could never have been ratified if it were not heavily underlined with "checks and balances".

The Constitution was tailor-made by and for Americans; it was fitted to their particular habit of thought. That point was emphasized by one of its makers, Gouverneur Morris, when he was Minister to France during the Reign of Terror. "The French", he

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wrote, "want an American Constitution without reflecting that they have not American citizens to support it."

MISSING FROM OUR original Constitution was a "check" that was all the more potent because of the omission. The straight-thinking pioneer knew full well that the power of government is in direct ratio to its income, and he was all for cutting the income of his new government to the bone; that way it could not get out of hand. About all he would allow it is what it could pick up from tariffs on imports. Since the foreign trade of the new country was insignificant, and tariffs could hardly provide enough to run the establishment, Hamilton made an urgent plea (see *The Federalist*) for excise taxes. More than that he could not get, and more than excise and tariff taxes did not get into the Constitution.

Certainly, no tax on incomes got into the Constitution. There was no chance, even if the Founding Fathers had thought of asking for it. A people that had but recently kicked over the traces because of taxes far less onerous could hardly have countenanced having their pockets picked. It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened if the colonials had offered King George an income tax; he would surely have granted them all the representation they wanted, and, humbly begging their pardon, would have removed all the disabilities he had imposed on them.

And so, from 1789 to 1913 (except for a war income tax levied by Lincoln, which was small and difficult of collection), the Federal government managed to get along on tariffs and excise taxes. It was a weak government, certainly, but the people were strong. Because it lacked the wherewithal to maintain enforcement agencies, it passed very few laws of intervention. Because the people could keep their earnings, no matter how big, the spirit of enterprise waxed strong. The peddler invested and reinvested his earnings from the original pack on his back, and built a department store. The blacksmith became a carriage maker, and his son an automobile manufacturer. Out of the savings of millions came railroads that spanned the country. The pace at which the economy of the country grew during the years when the people could keep and invest their earnings was miraculous.

BUT, THE POINT at issue is not how much better off we were economically when we could hold on to our incomes — that needs no proving — but how much better off we were politically and spiritually. Even though the master showers him with material things, the slave is still a slave. The proposal to abandon income taxation must rest its case not on economic arguments, no matter how convincing they are, but on the score

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of freedom. For, unless Americans want to be free, unless they put their tradition of freedom above all else, the Sixteenth Amendment will stay in the Constitution until the country takes its place with other Empires on the dump-heap of civilization.

The low degree to which the concept of freedom has fallen is illustrated by the jaunty enumeration of "freedoms" by our late President. To the pre-income tax American that sort of talk would have sounded silly. He knew that there is only one freedom — freedom from the government. He knew that only the political establishment had power to limit his will to live. To him the sum and substance of freedom was to be let alone.

That this concept of freedom has lost value is shown most forcefully in our acquiescence to military conscription. In the old days, conscription was equated with the most degrading form of government then known: Czarism. Compulsory military service was simply loathsome to any self-respecting American. Today it is accepted as honorable, even "democratic". Why? In the first place, since the government has the power of compulsion, thanks to the income tax, we have made our adjustment with necessity. (How many conscripts would we have if evasion were easy?) And then, also thanks to the income tax, the emoluments of soldiering have been made attractive, and the special privileges the ex-soldier can look forward, to most alluring. "Pay the soldiers", a dying Roman Emperor admonished his sons, "and the rest will take care of itself." But, to pay the soldiers one must have the income tax.

No pre-1913 businessman would have tolerated the invasion of his premises by snooping, arrogant agents of this, that and the other agency of government. As for filling our questionnaires calling for detailed information about his business and personal life, he would have considered that humiliating and insulting. However, this inquisitorial method was then impossible, simply because the government did not have the wherewithal to hire inquisitors. Cops must be paid.

In 1910, say, a Census agent who asked a woman her age, let alone questions of a more intimate nature, would have been unceremoniously kicked out. A worker would have howled "murder" if his pay envelope were picked by anybody but his wife. A government official would have risked his political life by offering a newspaperman a bribe, even of a cocktail, and the publisher who filled the pages of his sheet with government handouts would soon lose his circulation.

In short, the practices built up under the income tax have undermined our sense of freedom. For that reason, the task of the Association for the Repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment will be most difficult. But, the fact that it has been founded indicates that there are some Americans in America. The question is, how many?

For those who are interested, the address of the Association is 204 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, California. ADDITIONAL COPIES: One—$.20; six—1.00; ten—1.50; fifty—5.50; one hundred—10.00. Quotations for larger quantities on request.

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Ed*

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The Conflict: In Washington, they are saying:

"A certain famous general who voluntarily checked his advance at the Elbe is now about to be involuntarily checked at the Chicago river."

Among Democrats and Republicans alike — on Capitol Hill and in the clubs and hotels downtown — the verdict is that "Taft is in". But snap judgments while the situation continues fluid and amusing epigrams do not influence more serious, professional observers. The latter haven't yet made up their minds and watch with mounting interest the most extraordinary political duel in the history of American politics.

In the past 48 hours, this conflict which had been developing at an accelerating pace for the past ten days has reached what now seems to be a climactic stage.

Ike during these ten days followed a policy of attacking Taft (surreptitiously but pretty obviously) on foreign policy. Ike has now disclosed his basic strategy. It is "globalism", as so frequently predicted by his critics, and completely in tune with the ideas of the international bankers and Dewey "me-too" politicos in New York. But, apart from this strategy, were his tactics of going after Taft well timed?

Apparently, the Senator from Ohio, who had been somewhat more discreetly aiming shots at Ike, thought Ike's footwork clumsy. He temporarily dropped his pot shots at Ike and adopted a conciliatory line. Why? His new course, it is believed, was prompted by a new mood among Republican members of Congress and probably convention delegates throughout the country.

This new mood is one of "pox on both houses" and is an expression of fear that the developing bitterness generated by the two-man conflict might later, after nomination, dangerously shake the Party. Hence the renewal of talk about MacArthur as a compromise candidate.

(MacArthur remains faithful to Taft, but a part of that fealty — we learn — is his privately stated willingness to accept the vice-presidential nomination with Taft. Many observers here believe that this is Taft's "ace-in-the-hole".)

But why Taft's conciliatory role in face of Ike's provocations? He hopes — it is believed — that this attitude will placate delegates and leaders who fear party "disunity". On this theory, delegates would regard Ike as the disturbing, disunifying influence — and would turn to Taft. Certainly Ike plays right into Taft's trap by attacking Republicans, while refraining from attacking Democrats. Whether this Taft maneuver has met with success among delegates remains uncertain at this date of writing.

But meanwhile, Taft's conciliatory tactics have drawn fire from his own long-time, intransigent, "anti-me-too" followers. They don't like John Foster Dulles with whom Taft is flirting. Dulles — in their eyes — has too long been associated with "me-tooism" and Acheson. And this element strongly resents Taft's rebuke to their brothers in Maryland last week who had been attacking Ike. Were not these Maryland militants the ones who beat the Democrats in that state in '48? And how do you win an election without these militant "anti-me-too" groups?

In short, both candidates have taken risky roads to Chicago. The best guess at this date is: Ike has been checked, but whether Taft has won a Pyrrhic victory remains to be seen.

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Korea: Storm clouds again gather over the bloody peninsula and diplomatic correspondents here dwell on ominous indications both in Asia and Europe. There's an unconfirmed report around the town that the enemy may celebrate the second anniversary of the outbreak of hostilities in Korea with a new offensive.

Some well-informed circles here insist that our bombing of the power plants on the Yalu was designed to "cool off" the Reds in case they do plan a renewal of large-scale fighting. On the other hand, from the purely air warfare standpoint, there may be another reason for the sensational strikes at the enemy sources of electricity.

Within the past 36 hours word has come to the Capital that the American Air Force has ceased routine "interdiction" bombing in Korea. This term means bombing of supply lines — roads, railways, bridges, etc. The reason: enemy defenses against our air attacks — that is, anti-aircraft, radar and fighters — has become too strong and our losses too heavy. Within the past week, two B-29's on one raid were shot down by night fighters — a discouraging incident. In short, interdiction bombing has become pretty costly, and its interruption means that the enemy will be able to bring up supplies more easily and reinforce its forward areas better.

Hence — it is said — the big attacks on the Yalu region constitute the best way to jolt the enemy, and to compensate for our veritable "retreat" in the field of interdiction bombing. The strikes at the power plants were in the category of "surprise action", with the enemy presumably unprepared. Losses were bound to be lighter than down "milk-train alley", when we carried on interdiction missions every night in the same places, and the enemy was prepared.

But, can we keep it up? Or will the excellent Red radar, anti-aircraft and fighter defense soon come into play on the Yalu?

Spies and Diplomats: There is intense speculation in the Capital about the designation of a new Soviet Ambassador to the United States. The diplomat named by Moscow and accepted by the State Department is Georgi N. Zarubin, lately Soviet Ambassador to Britain.

It is recalled that Zarubin was Ambassador to Canada in 1945, when the famous spy ring operated in Ottawa until exposed by a renegade Soviet attache. Indeed, a trail of espionage seems to follow Zarubin's footsteps.

(1) As Ambassador to London in recent years, Zarubin must have read in the London papers about a certain atomic scientist in the employ of the British. It was Klaus Fuchs, who confessed to handing over atomic secrets to Soviet agents.

(2) Also while Zarubin represented the Soviet in Britain, another atomic scientist, working in England, was somehow persuaded to leave England and go to Russia. Why Pontecorvo was allowed to get away has never been satisfactorily explained. He is said to have known a great deal about the making of hydrogen bombs.

(3) A year ago, still with Zarubin in residence in London, two British Foreign Office diplomats fled their country and disappeared on the Continent, presumably behind the Iron Curtain. One of the men had access to much secret information concerning U.S.-British relations.

(4) Last week, British authorities arrested another Foreign Office man on the charge of betraying state secrets to one of Mr. Zarubin's aides in the Soviet Embassy.

Observers here conclude that the process which began with Alger Hiss will receive a new impetus with the arrival of this diplomat. They speculate that Zarubin may have had some contact, direct or indirect, during his stay in Canada, with "sleepers", in U.S. Government employ. "Sleepers" are the nightmare of our hush-hush services. "Sleepers" are Soviet spies, infiltrated into Government ranks, who remain inactive often for many years, until the day comes when Moscow gives orders for their "activation". It is almost impossible to detect them while they "sleep". Whittaker Chambers had much to say recently about the danger of this category of spy.

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Undoubtedly the FBI will double their guard over those contacting the Soviet Embassy under Zarubin. But those who know the history of the Comintern and its workers say that Zarubin is less dangerous than another he will presumably bring with him — his wife. Madame Zarubin is reported to have a brilliant record in the Soviet espionage ranks.

Handbook For Republicans: A retired newspaper publisher, Mr. James L. Wick, is the author of a 100-page book, entitled *How Not to Run for President — A Handbook for Republicans.* ($1.00. The Vantage Press, Inc., 230 W. 41st St., New York 36, N. Y.) A veteran of many Presidential campaigns, Wick has done a good job of exposing the fallacy of "me-tooism". His description of the Willkie and Dewey debacles — and the reasons therefor — are the best we have read. One of the last pages of the Wick opus contains this gem: "After the 1940, 1944 and 1948 defeats, the Republican Party ought to be cured of choosing nominees whose acceptance speech can be summed up in 23 words: 'Having nominated me you Republicans are trapped. You have nowhere else to go. Now sit back and watch me win New Deal votes'."

Revolt Against Bureaucracy: A small manufacturer of fountain pens, Paul Fisher of the Fisher Pen Company in Chicago, is staging a revolt against the Federal Wage-Hour organization. His fight recalls other standards of rebellion in the past year — Vivien Kellems and her one-woman battle against Secretary of the Treasury Snyder, and the housewives of Marshall, Texas, who have apparently routed the Internal Revenue Bureau as regards withholding taxes on domestic servants.

Fisher received notice from the Wage-Hour office that he should open his books and records for federal inspection. He asked if any complaints had been filed against him. He was informed there had not, but that the office wanted a routine check-up. "I told him if he had some complaints, or if any of my employees wished to have him examine my records to find out if I were complying with the law, I would be very happy to open them. If there were no complaints, I considered it a waste of my time, his time and the Government's money, and as an unfair imposition on my right as an American citizen and a violation of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution."

Wage-Hour authorities summoned Fisher to the regional office in Chicago. Fisher appeared and told them that he was defending his inalienable right to be free from Government intrusion in his business. Fisher later reported that the Federal official then laid down the following authoritarian doctrine: "You as an individual possess no inalienable rights, but you live under a democracy, subject to the will of the majority, and the will of the majority through an act of Congress can deprive you of any right."

The Wage-Hour authorities then took legal action and Fisher presented to District Judge Igoe a pamphlet written by himself, setting forth correspondence and facts in the case, entitled *Common Sense Today.* (Copies, 50 cents, address The Citizens Union, 3658 Broadway, Chicago 13, Illinois.)

The judge set a hearing for June 27. If Fisher loses his case, he may face a term in jail.

Higher Education: At Phoenix College, in Arizona, local businessmen are offered a course of instruction which, it is hoped, will enable them to better understand "federal, state and local regulations. The new federal regulations on materials and prices, brought about by our defense production program", the announcement continues, "will be given thorough treatment."

Instruction is by representatives of government agencies, who volunteer their services upon solicitation by the college authorities. The businessmen who have taken these courses, we are advised by the "coordinator" in charge, "have learned the working of the various departments as well as the reasons for some of the regulations . . . the course had brought a better understanding between the members of the class and the various government agencies."

Thus, our schools of higher learning fall in with the purposes of government. We do not believe that the students are offered any critical examination of regulation as a whole, nor that the question as

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to whether regulation is in line with the American tradition is brought up. It is, on the face of it, a course in adjustment to regimentation.

Witness: By Whittaker Chambers. Random House. New York. $5.00. Reviewed by William Henry Chamberlin.

This is a great book; one of the greatest written by a contemporary American. And, like many books of comparable stature, it is really several books in one. Whittaker Chambers has composed an "apologia pro vita sua", an eloquent story of a life that began in storm and sorrow, that went through a phase of tragedy, that ends on a note of tranquillity and redemption.

It is also one of the best and most readable accounts of life both in the "open" Communist Party and in its auxiliary underground organizations. No one can read this work with an open mind and carry away the impression that American Communists are just nonconformist radicals in the tradition of the Abolitionists, the Populists, the Greenbackers, and many similar political groups. The Communist Party, in America as in every non-Communist country, is a criminal conspiracy, with its members pledged to stop at nothing, espionage or sabotage, murder or treason, which will advance the interests of the foreign power, the Soviet Union, to which Communists everywhere are blindly subservient.

Finally, *Witness*, apart from a few lapses into repetitiousness and excessive attention to detail, is extremely well written. It reveals the qualities of thought and style which enabled Chambers, with the briefest and most harassed apprenticeship, to become one of the most brilliant and profound writers on religious and philosophical subjects for *Time*.

Comparing Max Bedacht, whom he met in the murky Communist underworld, with Gestapo chief Himmler, he speaks of a "disturbing quality of secret power mantling insignificance — what might be called the ominousness of nonentity, which is peculiar to the terrible little figures of our time". Himself a lover of the country, Chambers acutely remarks: "Communism is a faith of the cities, and can look upon the countryside only to organize, that is to say, to destroy it."

The author is a superb natural reporter and makes his entire existence, strange as it is when measured by the experience of the average American, come alive. The Soviet spymasters with whom he dealt become real personalities: "Ulrich", who had some of the attractive traits of an honest revolutionary; the cowardly, sinister and stupid Colonel Bykov, who insisted on giving expensive oriental rugs to Alger Hiss and other agents with the idea that this would bind them more closely to the "apparatus" (technical name for a spy ring).

Chambers has been the object of a tremendous hate and slander campaign not only by avowed Communists but by assorted left-wingers who are much more indignant over exposures of Communism than over the acts of treason and espionage which are exposed. His book is his best vindication. He is revealed as a man of high intellectual calibre who bore his "witness" with anguish and at much personal sacrifice, who is tenderly, even sentimentally devoted to his wife and children.

To Chambers, who was drawn to Communism by a spirit of religious quest for an absolute faith, "every sincere break with Communism is a religious experience". And the only possible answer to the Communist challenge is Faith in God. This assertion seems too sweeping and dogmatic. For Communism can certainly be rejected on purely rational grounds. And one could cite many examples of men who have been sceptics without turning into totalitarian monsters. But, while it is possible to arrive at Chambers' destination — rejection of Communism as a force of darkness and evil — by other intellectual roads, his account of his own redemption possesses profound spiritual and psychological significance.

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